

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MMS-04 AID-20 SNM-02 TRSE-00 M-02 SP-03

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0292

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEA HQ WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 6143

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, APER, LA

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS STAFFING FOR LAOS

DEA FOR IG BELK-EN DURKIN

REFS:

A) STATE 146613

B) VIENTIANE 5492

C) VIENTIANE 5350

D) VIENTIANE 5270

1. MISSION WORKING GROUP ON NARCOTICS CONTROL HAS COMPLETED REVIEW OF STAFFING LEVELS FOR NARCOTICS PROGRAM FOR ALL AGENCIES FOR FY 75-76. AT OUTSET, IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT, WHILE IT MIGHT BE PREFERABLE FROM STRICTLY TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW TO MAINTAIN PRESENT LEVEL OF ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT, THE CREATION OF NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH PATHET LAO PARTICIPATION HAS PRODUCED NEW SITUATION WHICH HAS NECESSITATED AN OVERALL MISSION POLICY TO REDUCE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. THIS, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, IS BEST WAY TO ENSURE CONTINUANCE OF MAJOR PROGRAMS--INCLUDING NARCOTICS CONTROL. FOLLOWING ARE MISSION'S
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STAFFING.

2. DEA: RECOMMEND FORMAL APPROVAL OF ONE ADDITIONAL DEA OFFICER TO NARCOTICS ATTACHE'S OFFICE, BRINGING DEA TOTAL COMPLEMENT IN LAOS TO THREE AGENTS. BECAUSE OF REDUCTION IN MISSION'S INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION CAPABILITY, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT DEA AGENT RECRUITED FOR THIS POSITION BE SPECIALLY TRAINED IN COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE. IN ADDITION, HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SPEAK LAO AND/OR FRENCH. TO ENSURE SMOOTH TRANSITION, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO EXPEDITING ASSIGNMENT OF ONE OF THOSE AGENTS CURRENTLY IN LANGUAGE TRAINING SO THAT HE MAY ARRIVE AT POST BY END OF CY-74.

3. CUSTOMS: BY END FY-75, WE RECOMMEND THAT NUMBER OF CUSTOMS ADVISERS IN LAOS BE REDUCED FROM FOUR TO ONE. WE BELIEVE THAT THREAT POSED TO U.S. BY RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT OF NARCOTICS FLOWING BACK AND FORTH ACROSS LAO BORDERS DOES NOT WARRANT THE LARGE EFFORT IN THIS FIELD PREVIOUSLY UNDERTAKEN WHEN AMERICAN FORCES WERE SERVING IN VIETNAM. THERE IS ALWAYS POSSIBILITY THAT LAOS MIGHT AGAIN BECOME A TRANSIT POINT IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC, BUT THIS IS NOT CASE AT PRESENT. THEREFORE, WHILE WE PERCEIVE CONTINUED NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN U.S. AND LAO CUSTOMS AGENCIES, IT SHOULD BE AT REDUCED LEVEL. WE WILL LEAVE IT TO EA INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP TO DECIDE WHETHER ONE REMAINING CUSTOMS ADVISER SHOULD BE CUSTOMS OFFICER PER SE OR FORMER CUSTOMS OFFICER SERVING WITH DEA.

4. USAID/NARCOTICS ADVISORY PROGRAM (FORMERLY USAID/PSD):

WE INTEND TO ELIMINATE THE ONE REMAINING POSITION IN USAID/NAP AT TIME OF DEPARTURE OF NARCOTICS ADVISER MAJOR MCBEE. WE RECOMMEND THAT, AT THAT TIME, DEA ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADVISING BOTH LAO NATIONAL POLICE AND MILITARY POLICE.

5. USAID/PUBLIC HEALTH: BY END CY-74, WE WILL ELIMINATE CONTRACT CLINICIAN POSITION AT NATIONAL DETOXIFICATION
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CENTER PRESENTLY FILLED BY DR. KIRKLEY SINCE THERE IS COMPETENT LAO DOCTOR WHO CAN TAKE OVER. GIVEN PENDING CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DETOX CENTER, WE INTEND TO RETAIN OPERATIONS OFFICER POSITION, PRESENTLY FILLED BY MR. LAWRENCE BERGER, UNTIL END FY-76.

6. USAID/AGRICULTURE: IN VIEW IMPORTANCE OF THIS FIELD TO THE LAO, AND TIME NEEDED TO OBTAIN EVEN BASIC RESULTS,

WE RECOMMEND RETENTION OF TWO USAID CONTRACT PERSONNEL TO WORK ON CROP SUBSTITUTION UNTIL END FY-76, AT WHICH TIME WE PROPOSE ELIMINATION OF ONE POSITION.

7. USAID/PRO: GIVEN DECREASE IN SIZE OF OVERALL PROGRAM, WE PRESUME THAT, AFTER FY-75, USAID NARCOTICS COORDINATION WILL NO LONGER DEMAND FULL-TIME ATTENTION OF ASSISTANT PROGRAM OFFICER FOR NARCOTICS.

8. INTELLIGENCE: IN VIEW OF PERSONNEL CUTS IN INTELLIGENCE FIELD, WE RECOMMEND THAT DEA REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT IN BANGKOK PROVIDE ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-COUNTRY SUPPORT TO PROGRAM IN LAOS.

9. COORDINATION: WE ARE CONVINCED THAT U.S. INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY CONSOLIDATING U.S. NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT EFFORT IN LAOS UNDER THE NARCOTICS ATTACHE OFFICE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1975. HOWEVER, AS NOTED PARA THREE, WE WILL LET INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE DECIDE WHICH WASHINGTON AGENCY SHOULD PROVIDE CUSTOMS ADVISER.

10. AFTER JULY 1, 1975, USG NARCOTICS EFFORT WILL CONSIST OF APPROXIMATELY NINE PERSONS WORKING ON VARIOUS FACETS OF DRUG PROBLEM. OUR PROGRAM WILL REMAIN SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE TO MEET ANY NEW NARCOTICS CONTROL PROBLEM WHICH MAY ARISE.
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